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April 6, 2010

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JE Fielding MD*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: ANTELOPE VALLEY REHABILITATION CENTERS CONSOLIDATION

This is to provide background information related to the consolidation of the residential services of Antelope Valley Rehabilitation Centers (AVRC) into one campus. These changes are needed because it is no longer feasible to maintain two campuses with significant facility needs, and consolidation can improve the program's overall functioning.

There are health and safety issues at both facilities that require immediate attention. The consolidation of the two facilities will correct or minimize many of the health and safety issues while fully maximizing the limited resources available to support these needed services for the residents of Los Angeles County.

### Background

For fiscal year 2009-10, the AVRC's overall operating budget is \$14,397,000. In large part, increases in expenditures over the past five years have been directed to cover the increased costs charged to DPH by other County departments (e.g., Internal Services Department, Office of Public Safety, and the Department of Health Services). The Warm Springs facility encumbers approximately 40 percent of charges from other County departments, with an annual charge of approximately \$1.7 million.

In 2006, DPH received jurisdiction over the AVRC as part of the separation from the Department of Health Services. At that time, DPH prepared several reports describing the declining conditions of the AVRC facilities and proposed plans for repairing the facilities' physical infrastructure as well as developing and improving the clinical treatment programs. The reports contain detailed descriptions of the conditions of the AVRC facilities, which reflected long-term, unaddressed problems. To bring both the Acton and Warm Springs facilities in compliance with the required State and County health and safety standards would require a substantial investment by the County. The consolidation will circumvent much of these costs. For example, consolidating the facilities will allow DPH to avoid paying the \$2.2 million required by the NOV and approximately \$4.9 million in additional Warm Springs Capitol Project repairs

In addition to the facility infrastructure, clinical issues impacting the lives of those with substance use disorders have changed dramatically over the past five years. Most of the Los Angeles County residents seeking treatment have few alternatives for assistance and are likely remain homeless, be in custody, utilize emergency rooms, lose their children, and/or be involved in domestic violence situations. Approximately 70 percent of the current resident populations at Acton have diagnosed co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. In order to meet the needs of this challenging population, the Acton program is working to incorporate the best current evidenced-based treatment practices. The Acton program has also developed separate programs for the adult men and women residents including providing gender-specific and trauma-informed services to each adult group.

The consolidation of the two programs, using the current level of funding and staffing levels to provide appropriate treatment, will necessitate that the consolidated facility at Acton will have a capacity of 240 residents with an allocation of 70 treatment beds for women and 170 treatment beds for men.

### **Recent Developments**

On December 16, 2009, and December 23, 2009, the Internal Services Department (ISD) received a Notice of Violations (NOV) from the California Regional Water Quality Board, related to the waste water treatment plants at the Warm Springs and Acton Rehabilitation Centers. The NOV's require the County to submit Corrective Action Plans, and failure to correct these violations will result in daily fines of as much as \$5,000 per day and possible closure of the two facilities. ISD estimated that the immediate cost to repair the issues cited in the NOV for Warm Springs is \$651,000. The overall cost to repair the waste water treatment plant at Warm Springs, however, is \$2.2 million. The immediate cost to repair the Acton waste water treatment plant is \$165,000 to meet minimal requirements and a total of \$231,000 to complete the full repairs.

After several months of using potable water, on February 10, 2010, the water filtration system at the Warm Spring Facility became fully operational again. However, in order to remain in compliance with the standards set forth by the DPH Environmental Health Division, this system must be monitored on a daily basis. ISD has estimated an additional cost of \$80,000 per year to provide on-going maintenance and monitoring of the system.

### **Next Steps**

The consolidation plan has been discussed with the Chief Executive Office (CEO) which concurs with this approach. The CEO will file a Board letter recommending a capital project to effectuate the consolidation. Once begun, the consolidation is expected to take approximately 12 months to fully complete. However, many aspects of the consolidation can occur earlier. DPH projects to begin the consolidation May 1, 2010, which will allow DPH to inform clients, staff, and referring agencies, and to realize the full saving for next fiscal year.

I will continue to keep you advised of any significant developments. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information on this matter, please let me know.

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PH:1002:005

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors